

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 3-22 are presently active in this case. The present Amendment amends Claims 1 and 3; adds Claims 5-22; and cancels Claim 2.

The outstanding Office Action objected to the drawings, specification and abstract because of informalities. The outstanding Office Action rejected Claims 1-4 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite because of the term "thereagainst" recited in Claim 1. Claim 1 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Thompson (U.S. Patent No. 4,523,890).

Claims 2-4 were indicated as allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. Applicant acknowledges with appreciation the indication of allowable subject matter. In response, Claim 1 is amended to recite the features of allowable Claim 2, and Claim 2 is canceled. Therefore, Claims 1, 3-4 are allowable over the prior art.

In response to the objection to the drawings, submitted herewith is a Letter Submitting Drawing Sheets along with 1 Replacement Sheet for Fig. 1 to show a downstream flange plate 9 secured to the disk. This feature finds non-limiting support in the disclosure as originally filed, for example at page 4, lines 23-26 of the specification and in original Claim 1. Therefore, the changes to Fig. 1 are not believed to raise a question of new matter.¹

In response to the objections to the specification and the Abstract, the specification is amended and the Abstract of the Disclosure is rewritten to correct the noted informalities, and

¹ See MPEP 2163.06 stating that "information contained in any one of the specification, claims or drawings of the application as filed may be added to any other part of the application without introducing new matter."

to be made consistent with the changes to the drawings. In light of their formal nature, the changes to the specification and Abstract do not raise a question of new matter.

Claim 1 is amended as suggested by the Examiner by changing “the” (last occurrence of last line) to --an--.

In response to the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, Claim 1 is amended to correct the noted informality. Specifically, the term “thereagainst” is delete and Claim 1 now recites that the downstream faces of the blade roots are in abutment against said downstream flange plate. This change finds non-limiting support in the disclosure as originally filed, for example at page 4, lines 23-26 of the specification. In view of amended Claim 1, it is believed that all pending claims are definite and no further rejection on that basis is anticipated. If, however, the Examiner disagrees, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned who will be happy to work with the Examiner in a joint effort to derive mutually acceptable language.

In response to the rejection of Claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection. However, in the spirit of moving prosecution forward for the present application, Claim 1 is amended to include the features of allowable Claim 2 so that the rejection of Claim 1 is now moot. The Applicant reserves the right to present Claim 1, or similar claims, in a continuation application and to address any traversed issues in such application.

In order to vary the scope of protection recited in the claims, new Claims 5-22 are added. New Claims 5-22 find non-limiting support in the disclosure as originally filed, for example from page 4, line 27 to page 5, line 13 with corresponding Figs. 2-4 and in the original claims. Therefore, the new claims are not believed to raise a question of new matter. Claim 5 is the only new independent claim. Claims 6-22 depend from Claim 5. Claim 5 recites certain features similar to Claim 1 and allowable Claim 2, but without “means-plus-

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function" language. Claim 5 recite "a plurality of axial spacers coupled to said upstream flange plate, each axial spacer being configured to prevent an axial displacement of one of the blades in a respective groove." Therefore, Claims 5-22 are believed to be allowable.

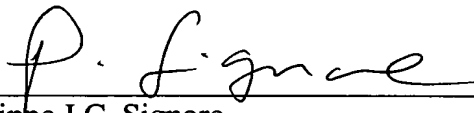
Dependent Claims 6-18 recite features similar to features recited in Claims 1-4 and Claims 19-22 recite other features related to the axial spacers.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment, no further issues are believed to be outstanding in the present application, and the present application is believed to be in condition for formal Allowance. A Notice of Allowance for Claims 1, 3-22 is earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner deem that any further action is necessary to place this application in even better form for allowance, the Examiner is encouraged to contact Applicant's undersigned representative at the below listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.



Philippe J.C. Signore
Attorney of Record
Registration No. 43,922

Customer Number
22850

Tel: (703) 413-3000
Fax: (703) 413 -2220
(OSMMN 06/04)

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IN THE DRAWINGS

The attached sheet of drawings includes changes to Fig. 1 to show the downstream flange plate 9 secured to the disk. This sheet, which includes Figs. 1 and 5, replaces the original sheet including Figs. 1 and 5.

Attachment: Replacement Sheet